

# Department of Justice

## High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project

### *Boston, Massachusetts*



### Addressing Interoperability

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Wireless Management Office (WMO) is working to improve long-term federal interagency communications across the Nation. As an interim step, and as a response to a request from the House/Senate CJS Appropriations Subcommittee staff, the DOJ WMO has been leading the High-Risk Metropolitan Area Interoperability Assistance Project (“25 Cities”) to provide targeted cities with basic and immediate interagency communications capabilities among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency response. Twenty-five cities were selected by criteria including perceived risk and population size. As stakeholders in 1 of the 25 cities, Boston metropolitan area local, state, and federal public safety agencies have been working collaboratively with the DOJ WMO to address basic interoperable communications.

### Participating Agencies

Partnership among Boston area local, state, and federal public safety agencies has been instrumental in the development of comprehensive interoperability solution sets. Participating agencies have included—

- Boston Fire Department (BFD)
- Boston Police Department (BPD)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Federal Emergency Management
- Federal Protective Service (FPS)
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
- Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- Massachusetts Environmental Police
- Massachusetts Port Authority
- Massachusetts State Police
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- U.S. Marshals Service
- U.S. Secret Service

### Key Successes

DOJ and area stakeholders successfully addressed basic interoperability and emergency response communications improvements in the Boston metropolitan area through the implementation of several interoperability solutions. The solutions, which leverage existing disparate communications systems, provide new wide-area interoperability capabilities. Additionally, in the course of meeting this project’s interoperability goals, stakeholders were able to leverage and expand the working relationship among local, state, and federal agencies to resolve interoperability objectives for the area.

The primary solution provides redundant wide-area interagency communications via the implementation of a backup repeater for an existing BPD wideband, very high frequency (VHF) channel that is linked directly to the BPD ultra high frequency (UHF) system. BPD dispatchers can use this channel to patch federal emergency response personnel on VHF radio systems to local and state personnel on UHF and 800 megahertz (MHz) systems (e.g., the Boston Area Police Emergency Radio Network [BAPERN] and an ITAC/ICALL channel). In order for BFD and FPS personnel to also have the capabilities to monitor and patch

resources to the BPD VHF interoperability channel, DOJ provided BFD and FPS each with a VHF control station. In addition, DOJ implemented UHF and 800 MHz control stations at the FBI dispatch center to enable wireless linking, on an as-needed basis, to local and state systems operating in those frequency bands, as well as to other UHF and 800 MHz systems.

DOJ also improved interagency communications among local, state, and federal agencies during emergency maritime response. DOJ implemented a VHF standalone repeater on a USCG maritime channel. This maritime channel also supports regular USCG liquid natural gas operations.

To coordinate common operating procedures for the new interoperability solutions, DOJ worked with local, state, and federal stakeholders. This collaborative effort resulted in the development of SOPs and an interoperability resource guide to address rules of use for channel patching. The interoperability resource guide, a tri-fold document, was developed as a quick reference guide that documents pertinent information about interagency channels, radio caches, and audio switches in the Boston metropolitan area.

### Moving Forward

The cooperation and support between participating agencies and DOJ WMO provided scalable solutions designed to give additional agencies future access to the interoperability solutions. Sustained operations, maintenance, and support of these interoperability solutions will be coordinated by key stakeholders. These efforts, along with stakeholder support, will ensure continuity in addressing interoperable communications among public safety agencies in the Boston metropolitan area.

### Contact Information

If you would like to know more about this initiative and the interoperability solutions, please contact—

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